

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

Online Only via BlueJeans

July 19, 2021

CONVENE: 9:05 a.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member

EXCUSED: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Tasha Kama, Chair

STAFF:

Wilton Leauanae, Legislative Analyst
Richard Mitchell, Legislative Attorney
David Raatz, Supervising Legislative Attorney
Shelly Espeleta, Supervising Legislative Analyst
Jean Pokipala, Committee Secretary
Pauline Martins, Committee Secretary
Lenora Dineen, Council Services Assistant Clerk

Evan Dust, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Lois Whitney, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Davideane Sickels, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Ellen McKinley, Executive Assistant to Councilmember King

ADMIN.:

Mimi DesJardins, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the
Corporation Counsel
Karla Peters, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
Lori Tsuhako, Director, Department of Housing and Human
Concerns
Ruth Griffith, Senior Services Division Administrator, Department
of Housing and Human Concerns

PRESS:

Akaku Maui Community Television, Inc.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . . (*gavel*) . . . Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Human Concerns and Parks Committee. My name is Yuki Lei Sugimura and I am the Vice-Chair of this Committee. Good morning and let's see, I think I'm going to be sitting in for Tasha Kama, and I will run this meeting today. And right now, it is, whoops, it is 9:06 a.m. Thank you, everybody, and welcome to the meeting. Roll call, I'm your Chair, I'm your Vice-Chair Yuki Lei Sugimura. Good morning, Ms. Lee.

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Madam Chair, bonjour como tale vu.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Bonjour.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Como tale vu. Nice...nice to see you. Nice to see you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Nice to see all of you. Bonjour como tale vu, and then that means we must go to Tamara Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Bonjour bien, como tale vu.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good. And this morning, she went to get her passport done. Good to see you here. Shane Sinenci, hello, Mr. Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Bonjour mademoiselle and Aloha Nui my Maui hikina, como tale vu.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Bonjour. Nice to see you with Hokulea in the background. Non-voting Members are, and welcome to the meeting, which is Gabe Johnson, Kelly King, Mike Molina, Keani Rawlins-Fernandez. From Department of Corporation Counsel, we have Mimi DesJardins. Welcome, Mimi. Parks Department, we have Karla Peters. Department of Housing and Human Concerns, I see Lori Tsuhako on the line. Lori, thanks for being here. Ruth Griffith, Administrator, Kaunoa Senior Services. And for Staff, Wilton Leauanae, Legislative Analyst, Jean Pokipala, Pauline Martins, Richard Mitchell, Legislative Attorney. Welcome to the meeting everyone. And it is being conducted online, in accordance with the Governor's most recent emergency proclamation on COVID-19. Please see the last page of the agenda for information on the meeting connectivity. We have two items on our agenda today. We have no testifiers, and I will double check again with Staff. The two items are HCP-25, Kalama Park Inline Rink Improvements (Grant G4876-2, Maui Inline Hockey Association), and HCP-27, Kaunoa Senior Services Leisure/Wellness Program. We have no testifiers here, so I will not go through all of the many announcements we have regarding that. Again, Wilton, do we have any testifiers that have signed up?

MR. LEAUANAE: No testifiers currently signed up.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right. Thank you, Members. So at this time, I'm going to close public testimony, and if we have any written testimony, we'll receive it into the records. Members, if you would allow that.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: No objections.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No objections.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: No objections. Thank you. Okay, thank you.

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

HCP-25 KALAMA PARK INLINE RINK IMPROVEMENT (GRANT G4876-2; MAUI INLINE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION)

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: The first item we have is HCP-25, Kalama Park Inline Rink Improvements Grant G, as in George, 4876-2, Maui Inline Hockey Association. And I'd like to refer this over to Director Karla Peters, from the Department of Parks and Recreation, who will be providing us with an update of the grant and take any questions you may have. Thank you. Nice seeing you, Karla.

MS. PETERS: Aloha and Good morning, Vice-Chair Sugimura, and Committee Members. Nice seeing all of you folks this morning. And thank you for having me here today. But the grantee was unable to provide a representative at today's meeting, so I'll be doing my best in giving you folks an update and answering any questions that you might have. Wilton, I did provide Wilton with an overview of the Kalama Park and showing where the inline hockey rink is. Wilton, would you be able to share that screen to give everybody an idea of where the project is located? Okay.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wilton. Oh, okay.

MS. PETERS: I can start while he's preparing to put that up for you all.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. PETERS: So included in the Department's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget, was a grant to the Maui Inline Hockey Association in the amount \$150,000 for the Kalama Park Inline Rink Improvement Project. This project included the following scope of work. There we go, there's our inline rink at the Kalama Park. This scope consisted of two items. The replacement of the deteriorated dasher boards and upper safety netting that surround the playing surface of the skating rink. The dasher boards are the bottom part of the frame's rink enclosure. The second part of the scope of work was the replacement of lighting fixtures required to comply with the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. Grant G4876, was executed in March 2019, with a grant period ending on December 31, 2019. The deteriorated dasher boards and safety netting were replaced within this period. Due to the review and coordination with the department and other agencies to ensure the lighting fixtures were in compliance with the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance, the grant was extended through December 2020 as Amendment No. 1, and executed in December 2019. Due to the ongoing challenges during the pandemic, the change and review of new fixtures, and there was an increase in cost of these new fixtures, and the need to secure the report permitting, the grantee requested for an extension through December 31st of this year. Amendment No. 2 was executed in December 2020, with a revised grant period ending on December 31st of this year. And that is what was on the agenda item, was this Amendment No. 2. The status as of today, of the replacement of the lighting fixtures, is they have...the Maui Inline Hockey Association grantee has an electrical contractor that has been

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

selected; an electrical permit has been approved; approved light fixtures have a six-to-eight-week lead time; and the project is estimated to be completed by the end of this amended grant period at the end of the year. And with that, Vice-Chair Sugimura, I'll take any questions from the Members.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Ms. Peters. So basically then, they're online to complete their project is what you're saying?

MS. PETERS: Yes.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: You don't see any problems.

MS. PETERS: No, that's correct. And we are working closely with the grantee to ensure that this can...or will be done by the end of the year. There were again...*(inaudible)*...and the need to really ensure that these light fixtures that were selected were compliant with the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance as well as working in coordination with other agencies to make sure that, you know, we all have the...park has that outdoor lighting, compliant light fixtures. As well as, you know, including in this...although this is a leased area within the park, we need to ensure that everything is seen in compliance.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Any questions, Members? Ms. Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Karla, when did you start with the County?

MS. PETERS: I started with the County, I've been here for 30 years.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow.

MS. PETERS: 30 years.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Remember...remember the Deputy Director, his name was Henry.

MS. PETERS: Oliva.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Oliva. Okay, this is the timeframe. This is when that online skate park was created in the mid-90's under him when he was the Deputy, and under Mayor Linda Lingle. So the reason why I know is because I put the money in the Budget for it, and it's lasted this long. So I'm really happy to hear that it's been successful, and thank you for all your help with it. Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's amazing.

MS. PETERS: Yeah, I think...

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's interesting.

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

MS. PETERS: The grantee has been very responsive and they've done an excellent job in allowing that space for the community and the inline hockey members.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Fabulous. Wow. Any more questions? Ms. Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No, I'm surprised she's that old. I didn't...you were with the County 30 years. Good for you. Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: I know. So when I worked with the County in 1999 to 2002 in OED, that's when I met her, but she was in the Planning Division as...I'm not too sure what your title was, but you sure knew everything that was going on at that...but, and you went from there, and I saw you just rise through the ranks. So yeah, Karla's pretty amazing. Shane Sinenci, you have any questions?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. And mahalo, Karla, for that presentation. I was just...we have our State park in Hana, so as always, we always have safety concerns, so especially with keiki's and their inline skating and protection, helmet protection, and those types of things. Is this one of the requirements of the you should, you know, once it completes, project is completed?

MS. PETERS: Yes. Member Sinenci, thank you for that question. So the Maui Inline Hockey Association does have rules and guidelines in which they implement. When you are in the rink, and they have...they actually have a night...a couple nights in which the public can go in and they're...I believe they provide if you don't have, like the skates and that type of protective equipment as well.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: All right, great. And I'm glad that we can provide our community with additional activities and sports. So mahalo again. Thank you, Chair.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Sorry. My...my volume was off. Ms. Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, thank you. I don't have any questions.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Members, this is fantastic. I...it doesn't sound like we need to keep this open. And you're progressing along the way and this...I'm sorry the contractor couldn't be here, but...so at this time, I'm going to file this communication just because I believe that you're on track and it doesn't sound like we need to keep it open for future. We'll look for our invitation to come to the opening, grand opening, re-grand opening of this. So thank you very much, Ms. Peters. So Members, I'm going to file this communication.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No objections.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Karla.

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

MS. PETERS:...(inaudible)...

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: ...(inaudible)...

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS. (Excused TK)

ACTION: FILE.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

HCP-27 KAUNOA SENIOR SERVICES LEISURE/ WELLNESS PROGRAM (CC 21-60)

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next, I'm going to go to the next item which is HCP-27, Kaunoa Senior Services Leisure/Wellness Program, County Communication 21-60. And let's see...reason we're taking this up is as COVID restrictions are being lifted, many of our constituents have inquired on the status of various County programs, including the program specifically for our Kupuna. Members, we have Director Tsuhako, from the Department of Housing and Human Concerns, who will be providing an update on this program. We also have Ruth Griffith, who served as an Administrator for Kaunoa Senior Services for many years and oversees a variety of senior services programs. At this time, I'd like to turn it over to Director Tsuhako and later to Ms. Griffith with your permission. Thank you very much. Nice seeing you, Lori.

MS. TSUHAKO: Hi good morning, Vice-Chair Sugimura, and Members. Thank you for having me. Ruth Griffith who's our Kaunoa Administrator is also here. What we want to do today...no PowerPoints or pictures or anything like that. It's just give you all, as well as the viewing public, a brief update on the operations of the leisure and wellness program at Kaunoa. And with one...with one pretty predominant theme, and that is to ask for everyone's patience as we kind of try to bring our programs back up to pre-pandemic levels. So let me just begin by giving a large overview of Kaunoa programing, and then I will defer to Ruth and she can answer more of the detailed oriented questions. So thank you for your patience. So, you know, Kaunoa does a number of functions for us at the department. They do as a contractor, they do meals on wheels. They do congregate dinning for seniors. They do assisted transportation for seniors. They do retired senior volunteer program that's Federally funded, and they also do our leisure and wellness program. The leisure and wellness program is largely funded through the County and through fees that are paid by the seniors to participate in activities where fees are attached. So if you can imagine, last year was a pretty challenging year for our senior services staff as they had increased numbers of request for meals-on-wheels delivery. They also closed because of the pandemic. They closed their congregate meal site, and had to sort of redo that program to

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

deliver meals to seniors in their homes. The leisure program and the wellness program was actually suspended for a while because of the health and safety protocols. That we needed to establish that wouldn't allow for gatherings of people in closed spaces. So for many months last year, once the pandemic hit, leisure program didn't really function in the same way that everybody has come to expect it to. So no classes, no hula, no excursions, no food demonstrations, no activities such as those. I think that was really hard on the seniors and we've heard from many of them. I'm sure you have too, about when are we going to get back to having classes, and when are we going to be able to these things. And so as I mentioned earlier, one thing that I wanted to really—

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wait one second. One second. I see we just lost quorum. I don't see Alice Lee on the call. I better call a brief recess.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, I think we only, we need three. We only need three for quorum.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, I'm sorry. Oh, that's right. Okay. Alice, I'm sorry. You're right. I apologize.

MS. TSUHAKE: --okay, no problem. Thank you, Vice-Chair. So, you know, now that more people have been vaccinated and new safety and health protocols have been in put in to place, certain restrictions about the number of people gathering have been lifted, Kaunoa is preparing and kind of ramping up to achieve programmatic outcomes closer to what everybody expected, closer to what everybody experienced pre-pandemic. I think the main message again is that of patience because it will be a very slow transition. Staffing is an issue. We have several vacancies at Kaunoa. During the time when there was no leisure program actively going on, the leisure staff helped with the delivery of meals to meals on wheels as well as congregate recipients. So we're having to reposition staff and we're doing things very gradually. So when I differ to Ruth, she'll explain to you that several months ago, we started offering online classes, which have been very well received by the seniors, especially as they've learned how to operate their computers in such and can get access to those classes. So a lot of exercise classes have been offered that way. They've been very popular. We've been slowly increasing the number of offerings done online and we will continue to do that. Even when the actual sites open to more in-person activities because some people will prefer to do activities online instead of in person. One of the other big themes that we are committed to at the department is for the health and safety of everybody who comes to our senior services program. So whether that be the seniors themselves or my staff, I do not want anybody to get sick. I do not want anybody catching that virus because of a program that we are operating. So the highest level of care and caution is being utilized before we totally open up programs to many people without having any control over the number of people or the impact that the virus spread could have on that population. So those are the two things, okay, gradual reopening, and request for patience while we do it. By the seniors who utilize our services, patience with our staff as we reorganize,

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

get fully staffed and regain the capacity to put on a program, a leisure and wellness program, that looks closure to what it did pre-pandemic. Ruth, are you there?

MS. GRIFFITH: Yes.

MS. TSUHAKO: Ruth, I'm going to...

MS. GRIFFITH: Oh, good morning, everybody.

MS. TSUHAKO: If you want to make any statements and then we can take questions.

MS. GRIFFITH: Good morning. Good morning, Councilmembers. Thank you, Director Tsuhako. I'm Ruth Griffith, I'm the Administrator for Kaunoa Senior Services. I have been here...been with the County before you ask, for 16 years, and have been chairing for the seniors for that long. Director Tsuhako did an amazing job actually describing where we are at this point. Where we have been since the pandemic. And patience, I appreciate the call for patience. We, you know, we get all those calls, the seniors wanting us to return the way that it used to be. Quite frankly, the way that it used to be is not going to be that way for a long time. But we are doing our best to provide something maybe new and different and still comfortable and meet their needs. I hope that they will be open to it and enjoy what we have to offer. Staffing is certainly a problem for us in terms of returning to full open status. We have lost two programmers out of three there, an office operations assistant. These are people that when the seniors return, they will see them, I mean they will notice that they are missing. And they'll understand that staff is very, very hard pressed at this point. However, we are still committed to meeting all of their needs. It will be gradual. We will even right now, we are planning to do like a soft opening where we will do some trial classes, couple classes to return. The seniors have already received a letter or will be receiving a letter any day now regarding how we are going to be doing that. What the new health and safety protocols will be in terms of coming to classes. So they are receiving that information now. When we do return those couple of classes, what we are going to do is actually those are just trial classes where we are going to try out all the new safety protocols. There's a lot more I think than people can imagine that there are, especially working with the elder population, we have to be extra, extra careful. So it will be a slow process as Director Tsuhako mentioned. After we open those, we will open those couple of classes to begin with. We are going to test those protocols to see how they work, make adjustments, check for their effectiveness, and then add as we can based on the capacity limits that we have and our staffing limits that we have. So, you know, not everyone will be happy. If their class doesn't come back first, you understand, and nobody wants to be back more than we do because we miss them. But that's where we stand in terms of reopening. So the other thing that we have done as Director Tsuhako mentioned, is we did begin an online class program, and that was, it started from scratch. I do want to mention it because I do want to give a lot of credit to our staff to do, that did the work. As you know, at that time when

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

the pandemic started, there was no real guidebook as to how to do these kinds of things as you all know. As we still know, that when we run this Zoom meetings or BlueJeans meetings, there's always people who don't know how to do them. We lose people all the time. So we face those obstacles as well as we try to open up online classes. We had to teach ourselves and our seniors how to use the technology one by one for the seniors. One by one individually because, and then us too, we didn't know what was going on when they call and they say, you know what I cannot see. Is something wrong with your system? I cannot hear. There's something wrong with your system. My...you're shaky. We have to figure out if it is the system or if it is the senior's system and then try to talk them through it. So it was a slow process just like it's going to be for reopening. Where we open with a couple trial classes first. We see how the system works in terms of getting seniors in and out. What their concerns are, what the problems would be, and then gradually add classes as we went along. There's also a learning curve for the instructors as well. It's a whole different format to do online as it will be a whole different format to have this kind of distancing with the seniors and have them distanced, working behind barriers, working with masks. These are all going to be factors that are going to come into play. With the online classes, they are going very well. They finally...I would like to thank IT by the way for their incredible effort in getting us online. When they themselves were just, you know, just barely one step ahead of us in terms of how to do all these things. So they brought in, they put in ethernet cables into our buildings in order for us to do, so that our visual and our audio would match when it got to the senior. It was just kind of that simple in needed equipment. So we put ethernet cables in. We worked closely with IT to get the proper programming in. Lots and lots, months and months of work, and then in October of 2020, we launched four classes. Our first four online classes, and that increased to eight and to 12, and today, we have 17. And so those are...we have about 550 unduplicated seniors participating in those programs. In the online program alone, many of those are new. They've never been in the leisure wellness program before. In doing the online program classes as well, it forced us to work harder on developing an email, you know, like an email tree and a phone tree. All those kinds of things that went away from physical printing of newsletters which cut down on costs. So we had invested time in doing that as well in order to get the online classes on. So there will be future savings for the County because of these advances that we've made and sometimes it takes a something like a pandemic or something major like that to make you do a change to something that's already successful. So we are going to be seeing some savings from that. We do have new seniors participating. We just did an evaluation of the online classes and they received a 97 percent satisfaction rating. Including...let me see...let me read it to you because I want to give credit to our staff. Thank you for your patience. 97 percent would attend another online class; 97 percent would recommend Kaunoa's online classes to a friend; 97 percent rated the instructors above average; 96 percent said that participating in Kaunoa's online classes helped them to maintain their overall health and wellbeing; and 95 percent gave an overall rating for the online classes of above average/excellent. So for something that is just of several months old that your leisure wellness staff has hit it out of the ball park, I

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

couldn't be more proud of them and thankful to our programming partners at the University of Hawaii, University of Hawaii Maui College, AARP. They also were very supportive. We all tried to kind of like share ideas and technological knowledge, so that we could all get there together for the sake of the seniors. That's about where we're at. Anyone have any questions?

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good job. Before I turn the floor over to Chair Lee, I just want to say that I went for a visit at the Kaunoa Senior Center, and you had a COVID-19 competition for all of your divisions. And I just want to commend you for doing that because it was educational. It was beautiful. I mean the displays were interesting, you know, per division, and maybe you can just talk about that. I mean I think it...to me encompasses, you know, how you...how you and Lori run your program. Ms. Tsuhako runs the program for it's very comprehensive. So if you could talk about that briefly as well as the safety protocols that you put in your van or was it a car?

MS. GRIFFITH: Yes.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: So that, you know, you have the shields.

MS. GRIFFITH: Okay. So we, you know, like at the beginning. And thank you for asking that question Councilmember. We like our staff like many staff members in the County were considered essential. We had to remain at work, even when things were very, very scary, and continued to serve in the staff. It was hard on the staff. They had to go face to face and out in the public, and their fear actually wasn't that they were going to get sick. Their fear, as it is today, is that they will get someone else sick. And so the amount of stress and pressure from that was starting to get to them. And a lot of...when you have that kind of fear, rumors tend to have a lot more credibility than facts. So one of the things we did was, we have a very competitive staff. One of our balances having fun as a way of life. So if you turn anything into a competition, they're going to go for it. So we are very competitive. So we turned it into a fun thing, where we had a COVID awareness, COVID facts competition. So every program here at Kaunoa was tasked with coming up with a poster board or something that they had to show all the different COVID facts. It was facts versus fiction on this poster board, and then they could get as creative as they wanted. And there were prizes for it, which always helps. And we had someone from Risk Management come down to judge, from the Water Department, and also from DHHC to come judge. Just to help other people as well. People who we felt were probably under a lot pressure as well to have a break. And they did an amazing job. If you ever want to see pictures, I'd be happy to share them with you. But it really did help raise awareness for what is facts. That just being...walking into a carport to deliver a meal where somebody had been prior and had just taken a test doesn't mean you are at risk of getting COVID. So that's one of things that we did. In terms of the other safety protocols that we put in, the staff here for assisted transportation had to come up with a way to create safety distancing or a barrier rather, in order to improve the safety situation in our sedans because we have sedans. We don't

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

have a lot of vans. A van is the only way to maintain six feet distancing operating, but we don't have those. We have one van for wheelchair accessibility, so we had to use our sedans. The staff here actually came up with, developed their own barrier system. The park caretakers here along with the AT staff, assisted transportation staff created a barrier system for the cars that would still allow for maximum ventilation, for the ac to work properly, and for seniors to remain in the car whether it's front seat or back seat. Some people can't get in the back seat to ride safely at a proper distance from the driver, to protect the driver at all times. So that is something that we developed. It's one of a kind. Please don't ask them to repeat it for the entire County. We can't do that. But it is...it's an amazing thing that Jero Tumacder, who's our head Park Caretaker. Those are just some other things.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thanks for sharing that, and he was so proud, you know, as he was displaying that. He actually took it to a Statewide conference and they were very impressed with your work, but congratulations. So, Chair Lee, you have any questions for.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yes, I have a question. Thank you, Madam Chair. Hi, Ruth.

MS. GRIFFITH: Hello.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And thank you, Lori, for your great overview and Ruth for bringing us up to date on the programs at Kaunoa. I was just wondering if you would consider or thought about a new program such as having youngsters, whether it's high school or whatever age, be mentors to the seniors? And the reason for that is speaking from my personal experience, it took me a while to make the adjustments to work online and one of the benefits of working online every day is repetition fosters proficiency. But if you don't do it every day or often, you tend to forget the little, a few steps here and there. So sometimes, having a mentor, whether she's or he's in the eighth grade or ninth grade, would be very helpful. I know for a fact because my grandson who is...just turned 18, I always confer with him when I need help. And sometimes he'll tell me, but grandma I told you how to do it six months ago, you know, as if I'm going to remember what happened six months ago. So if you...if they had...if you had a little cadre of mentors for the seniors, I think that would be very helpful for them. And the seniors won't mind asking people who they consider like their grandchildren or their grandnephew or their grandniece. Something to consider.

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Chair Lee. I think that's a wonderful suggestion. I will be calling your grandson after this meeting.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. He's...I agree. He's pretty amazing, right. Only thing you better call quick because he's going off to college, right.

MS. GRIFFITH: Okay. I will.

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Mr. Sinenci, and then Ms. Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair, and Mahalo, Director Tsuhako and Ms. Griffiths. Yeah, and I agree. I know you guys are going through a re-changes and especially during these COVID the new COVID proclamations and regulations. My question was about Hana. I know that your meals and wheels program benefits a lot of our seniors in the East Maui district and so I was wondering what kind of changes, or what assistance that you guys needed to continue, if you have any challenges in getting out the meals to our seniors in East Maui.

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Councilmember Sinenci. I really, really appreciate that. We will be calling you as well. There...we have been displaced because of, along with the several organizations because of some work that has to be done at the location that we're at, in the building that we're at, so we may be calling you about that. Currently, service is uninterrupted. The staff member that we have out there is extraordinary. She knows the community very well. So she has been able to do that, but I thank you for that offer. We will be contacting you then to see if there are any ways that you can be of assistance to us. We appreciate it.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay, thank you. Thank you, Chair.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow. This is a fantastic networking meeting. Ms. Paltin, are you going to volunteer for Lahaina?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, no, that wasn't my question. I just was wondering, you know, I spoke with a constituent recently that wanted to come to testify to one of our meetings, but he doesn't have a smartphone. He doesn't have a computer. And I just was wondering if that's the case for any of the seniors that we had previously given service to or possibly new seniors that are feeling isolated that there not only the lack of knowledge, but the lack of a device that could enable them to get more connected. If that was a problem that you folks were encountering.

MS. GRIFFITH: Director Tsuhako, may I answer? So we actually did contact the seniors. The ones that were mostly homebound or the congregate seniors. Not so much the leisure seniors, they tend to be a little more savvy about computers or, and more active. So some of the ones who are homebound and isolated like you mentioned, we did talk to them, and yes some of them did need devices. Some of them did need assistance, and still do. One of the great programs that we worked on was a University of Hawaii Maui College program called Kupuna smart and that program has now ended, so we don't want people calling them for computers or tablets. But they have received some CARES money I believe for our Kupuna smart program, which put 150 tablets into the hands of homebound seniors. Along with that, so we help them to screen, and we help them to determine which seniors would benefit the most from that, from isolation. So one of the criteria was whether or not they were really isolated and in need of that

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

tablet. So that they didn't just get a tablet. Oh, do you want a tablet? Oh yeah, and then give it to their grandson, right. So we did make those determinations for them because we know them well. And if you just called them on the phone, it's hard to determine that, so we did help them make the determination. So 150 seniors. Also, we didn't do a whole 150, they had some of their own, received these tablets along with connectivity for a year, after which the senior would then decide whether or not they wanted to continue or not. In addition to that, instruction was provided by the University of Hawaii Maui College students, so it was part of their learning as well. I believe there is still a helpline or there was a helpline up where the seniors could call for additional assistance. But they were given one-on-one phone assistance with the students. And we helped to bridge that gap, that barrier of safety and trust, to introduce those students to the seniors. So seniors as on Lanai and Molokai also received these tablets. And we actually have a senior on Molokai, I think she's in her 90's. She got a tablet and then signed up for our online classes all of them. It's like her social thing. So she jumps in and she'll say aloha from Molokai. So yeah, the online classes are great. It helps us to bridge all three islands and provide Lanai and Molokai with a lot more than they probably could with their own resources, as well as West Maui. Maui is limited in resources as well for instructors so. Yeah, so we did get some out. If you know of any who, specific people that we can work with. Maui County Office on Aging, they also assist with those kinds of. But from our perspective, I think the ones that we serve anyway, they are okay. They did very well. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay and thank you. The other question I had was, you know, when you said that you were...you folks are getting the complaints too. I just was wondering what the various types of complaints were.

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Councilmember Paltin. Basically, why can't we come back? And the reason, and we understand that because they see other places opening up. We do understand that, but there is a safety factor. The other thing. The other complaint is the reason why some of them complain too is because they believe they have a solution as to how we can let them come back. So members from a specific class might say, I don't see why you cannot come back if you just do this, do this, do this, do this. So we really can't do that, but I mean in short, we can't satisfy everyone all the time but you know. They...some of them have really great suggestions and but a lot of the times, we just can't. I think it's not a complaint as much as it's just an eagerness to return, you know, and as the County, we...we are not going to take any kind of risk. So slow and steady it is...as long as safety comes first. And that's why we ask for their patience. I'll ask again, please be patient. We're working as hard as we can.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So basically, they just would like the human-to-human interaction or return to like what they consider normalcy kind of thing?

MS. GRIFFITH: Correct. Socialization is a huge reason why they do leisure. So there's our online classes do appeal to a lot of people and it is providing them with the

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

physical exercise that they need. And because we use a program that allows us to see all the faces, we can also provide safety checks of them while they're exercising. So we can monitor them. That's something that we offer that many other online classes don't offer. But and they can see each other which they are happy about. But they will miss the social interaction. And without social interaction, you see decline and that's mostly in our congregate...(inaudible)...who were congregate, by its very definition, "getting together" is why they were in the program. So most of the decline and the urgency to return that program back for those seniors who tend to be older. They're in their 80's, late 80's. The leisure seniors tend to be a lot younger and yes, they do miss the socialization. Yes, they do need it. They are also, tend to be more able bodied and able to get that socialization outside of the County. Whereas, with a lot of our older ones, they're dependent on us to provide that. So that would be our priority.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And they don't have...they would prefer to get back? They don't have the fear of catching the Coronavirus and dying? They're not very concerned about that?

MS. GRIFFITH: That's a good question. Some of them are, and some of them are not, just like the general population. There are those who say they will not return, and they will continue to take online. And so that's why we will continue the online classes because there are those who require it for safety reasons. And then there are those who are not concerned or as concerned. They feel that they can come back safely and gather safely. We cannot tell who is vaccinated and who is not. So if everyone was vaccinated, that would be different. We could probably, you know, it would be a little easier for us. But without knowing that, the exposure risk is still high, too high for us to gather everybody together, and we do have abide by the County's protocols.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Ms. Paltin. That was...this is very interesting. Thank you very much for what you both do for our seniors. Such a valuable service and as we can hear, from your October four online classes to 17, what is your...if you went all online, what is your total number of classes that you think you could reach.

MS. GRIFFITH: Interesting question. Some of them we couldn't because some of those are excursions. And I guess we could, that would just be a little different, like whale-watching excursion. I mean that's kind of not an online thing. We prior to the pandemic, we had about 11, or 1,500 activities, about 5,500 sessions. So to get that all online is a little much. Yeah, the volume is pre-pandemic volume is extremely high with 4,500 unduplicated participants participating in face to face. So some of it is going to have be face to face if we bring it back. But we are

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

going to be increasing our online library, so that other people can join in later. But online is something I think that's very beneficial. It's reaching people who are not comfortable with the face to face. Even pre-pandemic, to be honest, I'm not a very social person. So I'm uncomfortable in classes with people I don't...I'm not familiar with, so online is perfect for me. In fact, I have taken our online classes myself. So there are those people who now can participate comfortably in the leisure program that were not comfortable before, so I think that's a good thing.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: I would never believe that you're not a social person from the years ago that I met you in Lahaina. I mean you definitely were the mover and shaker that got a lot of people together. So as you sit in that chair, I think you're the perfect person for that. Members, anybody else have any more questions? Ms. Tsuhako, you want to say anything?

MS. TSHUAKO: I thank Madam Vice-Chair, just thanks for having us today. I'm glad that Ruth and I were able to be here today to talk about the pace of the reopening and the reestablishment of the leisure and wellness program. Again, begging for patience from the seniors. I know that everybody is sort of eager to get on with things after having a year of living very differently. But please know that we care not only about that year of living differently but also about the years going forward. We don't want to have anybody fall ill because we've not taken our time to do due diligence and plan this out thoughtfully. So we thank everyone for patience and for waiting just a little bit longer while we get ramped up, and we appreciate that.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much for your hard work, Ms. Tsuhako. I think one of the reasons why I like you as a Department Head is because you walk the talk all the time in the many different divisions that you manage, so I appreciate you. I guess now Riley from Ms. Lee's grandson is going to get busy up until the time he goes to college and I like that suggestion, very good suggestion. I will tell you that my summer intern, Kai Okuni, who just graduated from King Kekaulike High School before he goes off to UH Manoa. I saw him now. He's working at Marco's restaurant. So they're a great resource for many, many different reasons and their energy level is time of appreciation as we're looking for more workers and more talent. Shane, meals on wheels in Hana, amazing. One day you should, you know, see what this meals on wheels program is. They do a great job. I'm sure they could use your help. And when I was at NACo, before this meeting started, I thanked Chair Lee for allowing me to go there. And in NACo, which was the first online face-to-face conference that I've attended in that magnitude. One of the things that I got out of the meeting was attending a...I heard a presentation about the opioid problem, and opioids are drugs that you can find in medicine cabinets, and what they said was that, if you have an organization that seniors trust because they may have medication. I immediately thought about you, that there is and what the presentation was actually was a container that old medication can go into that they're not using anymore and not leave it in the house or somebody else to take by mistake or, you know, to or to

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

July 19, 2021

add to the opioid problem but as a...information...infrastructure transportation Chair, the container that it's in is a biodegradable container. It looked like plastic, but it decomposes along with the medication that you would put water...the medication...put some water into this container, throw it in the rubbish can, and then when it goes to the landfill, it decomposes, so I looked at that from that perspective. But when they did say, if you have an organization that can be trusted by people that this container, you know, then can, you can put your old medication and I immediately thought about meals on wheels, you know, after I went to on that visit. So I will try to even talk to you about it just to see if there's a possibility because you know their situation the best. But I will tell you that I immediately thought about meals on wheels, Lori Tshako, and Ruth Griffith. Because I thought if anybody would understand the seniors or a possibility of making this work, it would be you. So Members, I have no further questions and Member Tasha Kama asked for this to be deferred. So I'm going to defer this item so that she can bring it up again as we evolve and turn into what our new normal may be with this...with COVID. So at this time, I'm going to defer this item Members.

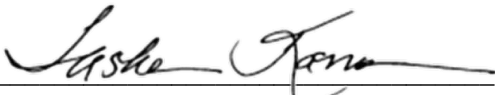
COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS. (Excused TK)

ACTION: DEFER.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. If you have no other questions or concerns, this meeting is now adjourned and it is now 9:56 a.m. Thank you, Members, for being here. . . . (gavel) . . .

ADJOURN: 9:56 a.m.

APPROVED BY:



TASHA KAMA, Chair
Human Concerns and Parks Committee

hcp:min:210719:jp

Transcribed by: Jean Pokipala